

Dear Salmonberry Families,

We are standing on the threshold now as we are about to enter a new chapter of Salmonberry School's story. Tomorrow at noon, we open Salmonberry's distributed learning campus. I wanted to go over a few logistics with you as the teachers and staff welcome you in to this new environment. And I also need to share a personal message down at the end of this note. Please read all the way through.

The "Big Picture"

As a small, holistic relationship based school, Salmonberry is deeply committed to emphasizing joining your child and you in their continuing educational journey. As Paul B says, quality education is never about "stuff," it is about relationship. Your child's home-based learning will continue to be supported by caring teachers who will offer challenges, guidance and mentorship for both your child and you. Our approach to distributed learning will be less about dropping your kids into slick digitally animated platforms, and more about keeping kids connected and engaged one project at a time.

Physical packets

Our work will begin with the hand-off of physical packets. All physical packets, boxes and bags are available for each family to pick-up on the back porch of the elementary school building beginning at noon on Monday, 3/23. These packets were prepared using all best practices to reduce any chance of contagion and were set out 24 hours ahead of pick up. We request there be, one family on the porch at a time for pick up, and please maintain the 6-foot social distancing protocol. Handle only your own family's packet. When you return home on Monday, take some time with your child as you explore the contents of your packet.

Entering our virtual campus

Families who have not already done so, please create your family's user account so you can log in to the portal. Link [HERE](#) to do so. Laura will need to approve your registration request so please create your account prior to our going live at NOON on MONDAY. If you are unsure or have forgotten if you have an account, please try your log in credentials first and then email Laura at programs@salmonberryschool.org, and she can let you know.

Once you are approved and have logged in, beginning at noon on Monday, 3/23 you will see a banner with each classroom-Kindergarten, Primary, and Intermediate listed. (It is not visible now, as we continue to edit and add final touches.) On Monday afternoon, click the classroom(s) that apply to your student(s) and you are in! Bookmark your class' home page for future ease of use. This will be the centralized place to look for all school and classroom communications, weekly schedules, assignments, and other messages from the teachers. Eventually we will also be posting kids' sharing as we receive it from you.

These pages and the precise logistics and types of content are going to vary widely between our three different age classrooms, of course. The common thread again (at the risk of being repetitive) is that *all teachers are very committed to maintaining really strong relationship-based teacher-learner mentorship with your children and with you.* Initially, this will undoubtedly feel different than what we're used to, but the school staff are up for the challenge. Prepare yourself that the first week may have some unexpected wrinkles. Questions will arise. Have patience while we refine our processes. In general, we are more than happy to receive your individual feedback and requests. We again, humbly ask for a little patience and breathing space during this first week.

Staff contacts

Should you feel the urge to reach out to any of us individually during this next phase, I wanted to make sure you had all of our contact info. Here it is:

Paul Freedman 360-622-8324 head@salmonberryschool.org

Laura Black 360-298-3420 programs@salmonberryschool.org

Paul Brahce 608-698-2545 kindergarten@salmonberryschool.org

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Tuition policy

To ease one small burden Salmonberry has suspended all late fees associated with remaining tuition payments during the Covid-19 crisis. This is effective immediately and will remain in place through the end of the 2019-2020 billing cycle in May.

In addition to ongoing operational costs, the Salmonberry Board has guaranteed fulfilling faculty and staff contracts throughout the 19-20 school year. We are fully committed to offering an excellent and supported education program within this distributive learning model for as long as it may last. As such, the school cannot afford to waive current tuition policy and the financial obligation of the family remains in accordance with the tuition policy set forth in the Handbook and on TADS. Although families are responsible for paying remaining tuition, which for many who are on a monthly payment plan, means 2 more payments- April and May, **for any of you who foresee having difficulty with these remaining payments due to loss of income, business closure, or illness please reach out to Salmonberry's admin. team--that's Paul F. (head@salmonberryschool.org) or Laura (programs@salmonberryschool.org)--so that we may collaborate on an alternative payment plan.**

A personal missive

Now, on a more personal note...

As I mentioned in our all school Zoom meeting, my 23-year old son, Quinn (one of Salmonberry's first students) has been ill with fever and cough for eight days. My wife, Andria and I ended up spending several days in Bellingham over this past week, supporting from a distance, and ending up at the ER at Peace Health, St. Joseph's. We are now assuming he was Covid-19 positive, though he was not officially tested (they ran a bunch of other tests - but the Covid-19 test apparently continues to be very scarce in Whatcom Co.) And...he's now doing better, and looks like he's through the worst of it.

What has been amazing, while living through all the stress and anxiety and fear of this past week, has been the outpouring of love, care and blessings from friends and family literally all over the world. Andria and I have received cherished words in Maori, Hawaiian, Korean, Thai Lakota, Czech, French, Swedish etc. And of course some of the most heartfelt gestures of support from this amazing Salmonberry family. **YOU** are **THE BEST!!!** This isn't the right place for individual shout-outs, but we are truly grateful for each and every one of you. The well-wishes have been sincere, generous and overwhelming.

Please let us all continue to stick close together. While I believe my own family's health crisis is now behind us, I know we are each facing a wide range of other challenges. And every one of us will likely be affected in significant ways during the coming weeks. It may well be a roller coaster ride for some of us. Through whatever comes, let Salmonberry be the center to which we know we can each return, where we will be held with love, compassion and understanding, and without fear of judgment.

I have heard that there has been a fair bit of cyber "road rage" out there in the world, as frustrations and fears are misdirected towards any and all "others," even more boldly perhaps while we are separated by the distance afforded by the buffer of screens. Let Salmonberry always be a community of care, even and especially during these crazy times. One colleague in New Zealand, Steve Arnold, Director of the Peace Experiment School in Auckland, who is usually not fond of clichés, writes in Latin: *Amor vincit omnia* "Love conquers all." (I wish I could introduce you to all of my friends!!)

My many, *many* **MANY** thanks to you all for who you are and for the love you share with these precious children. It continues to be a great honor to do this work with you.

~Paul Freedman